

and upon the constitution that should be adopted by any nation desirous of organising its life upon Socialist principles " For the Fabian Society, as one of these constituent parties, the Webbs accordingly prepared what to them "seemed most likely to be useful"—i e not any "brief statement of abstract principles or vague generalisations," supposed to be of universal application, but "a definite and concrete proposal, worked out in some detail, for one country only " Their book is this proposal They begin by "briefly noting," as facts in advanced industrial countries, on the one hand, a great waste of productive power and gross inequality leading to penury and destitution and, on the other

"The continued existence of the functionless class—of persons who deliberately live by owning instead of by working, and whose futile occupations, often licentious pleasures, and inherently insolent manners undermine the intellectual and moral standards of the community "

These facts they were to amplify, with much well-directed harshness, in *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, three years later, here, they merely touch upon them, and pass on, at once, to establish the premise from which they have consistently approached the problem—the premise of democracy

"The central wrong of the Capitalist system is neither the poverty of the poor nor the riches of the rich, it is the power which the mere ownership of the instruments of production gives to a relatively small section of the community over the actions of their fellow-citizens, and over the mental and physical environment of successive generations "

At the close of a "survey of the ground" which

occupies the
first part of the book they say

" It is abundantly clear that what is wrong
with the world to-day
is not too much Democracy but too
little, not too many
thoroughly Democractic institutions, but
too few "